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Monday, February 28, 2005

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Georgia looks at Maine laptop program, tops it

By COLIN HICKEY
Staff Writer

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By COLIN HICKEY

Staff Writer

Maine remains distinct in the nation in having a statewide laptop program for schoolchildren, but Georgia now boasts the country's largest and most expensive one-to-one computing initiative.

The Cobb County School District made that so earlier this month when it entered into a nearly \$70 million deal with Apple Computer that will supply about 63,000 iBook G4 laptops for students and teachers in Grades 6-12.

Maine, though, proved to be a major factor in Cobb County's decision.

"We did look very closely at what Maine did," communications director

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The MLN recently presented Castonguay with its Excellence in Education Award to acknowledge her efforts in educating providers and patients about lymphedema management.

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Carmen Hetherington, R.N.

A nurse educator and emergency nurse at Central Maine Medical Center, has been awarded the Emergency Nurse Educator Award by the Maine Emergency Nurses Association.

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communications director Jay Dillon of Cobb County said, "and we were really impressed and talked to many people who played a large role in (the Maine) program."

Maine's program, started two years ago, cost \$37.2 million over a four-year period and involved equipping more than 30,000 teachers and students in grades 7-8 with Apple iBooks.

Dillon said Cobb County is fortunate to have had the opportunity to study other large deployments of laptops before launching its own.

"We are at a big advantage because we have had the benefit of observing a large-scale deployment like Maine and Henrico County (Public Schools in Virginia), and we have been able to learn from some of the challenges they had to meet at those locations," Dillon said.

Unlike Maine, Cobb County will first supply high school students with laptops, then expand the program to the middle-school level.

Apple promotes one-to-one computing in education, arguing that it raises student engagement and achievement, claims made by those who have researched Maine's laptop initiative.

So far, however, one-to-one computing in the classroom has yet to become a national phenomenon.

Apple says it has relationships with more than 400 schools in its Apple 1 to 1 Learning program. Maine alone has 239 middle schools in the program.

Still, with the addition of Cobb County, the idea of a computer



Staff file photo by Jim Evans

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At Messalonskee High School, teacher Becky Thornton works with ninth-grader Kyle Morison on one of the school's 275 laptop computers. The state hopes local school systems will contribute funds to expand the laptop program into high schools.

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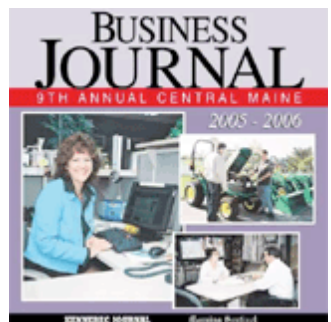
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